



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

March 3, 2025

Michael J. Cerio | Cerio Communications

Michael@CerioCommunications.com

National Reading Month: BankRI Holding Children’s Book Drive during March
Month-long collection benefits Books Are Wings school and community programs that put free books in the hands of Rhode Island kids

PROVIDENCE, R.I. – March is National Reading Month, and to help Rhode Island children who might not otherwise have books in their home, Bank Rhode Island (BankRI) is partnering with [Books Are Wings](#) for a month-long book drive. Through the end of March, everyone in the community is invited to give kids the gift of literacy by donating new and gently used children’s books at any [BankRI branch](#) in the state.

The drive also includes a way to [participate virtually](#) by purchasing new books sent directly to Books Are Wings. Last year, the BankRI Children’s Book Drive collected 8,252 books.

“Our children’s book drive is one of our most important community initiatives – every donated book matters,” said Will Tsonos, BankRI’s president and CEO. “Together with customers, community members, and staff, we can help ensure children in Rhode Island have books of their own and the opportunity to fall in love with reading.”

This marks the 15th year that BankRI has partnered with Books Are Wings for its drive. The collection is one of the largest held on behalf of the organization, which distributes upwards of 65,000 free books to local children each year. Books Are Wings’ unique programs and education-based partnerships work to improve childhood literacy and increase book access, focusing especially on the communities of Central Falls, Pawtucket, Providence, and Woonsocket, where literacy rates are the lowest in the state.

Books collected by BankRI will support Books Are Wings school and community programs across the state. They include programs like “Books All Year,” which provides free books to children in K-5 classrooms and encourages them to build their own at-home libraries, and the “Tale Mail” program. Through “Tale Mail,” families of children ages 3 to 5 receive a bilingual package of two free books and craft materials every other month to help build a positive literacy environment in kids’ homes. Programs like this are critical as the most recent Rhode Island KIDS COUNT Factbook reports that only 18 percent of third graders in Rhode Island’s four urban communities are meeting expectations in reading.

“There are so many children who simply do not have access to books at home,” said Jennifer Smith, executive director of Books Are Wings. “We work with partners like BankRI to bridge the gap for young readers and their families, helping to build their home libraries through our programs. Book access is key to improving reading skills and brings families together in support of their child’s education.”

For information on BankRI branch locations and hours, visit www.BankRI.com/locations.

###

About Bank Rhode Island

Bank Rhode Island, a wholly owned subsidiary of Brookline Bancorp, Inc. (NASDAQ:BRKL), is a full-service, FDIC-insured financial institution headquartered in Providence, Rhode Island. The bank operates 22 branches and more than 30 ATMs throughout Providence, Kent, Newport and Washington Counties. For more information, visit www.bankri.com.